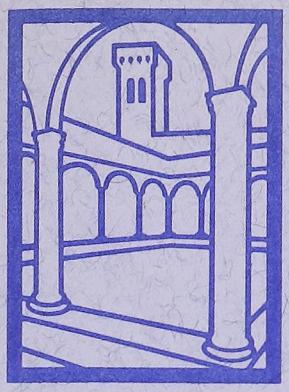

EUI WORKING PAPERS

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THE CORSICAN STATUT PARTICULIER: A RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEME CORSE

by

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European University Institute, Florence

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

E U I W O R K I N G P A P E R N O . 85/176

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THE CORSICAN STATUT PARTICULIER: A RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEME CORSE

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ITALY

APRIL 1985

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Introduction

When the French Left took power in 1981 by winning the Presidential election in May and the Parliamentary elections in June, they were in a powerful position to implement far-reaching changes in the French state and society. It was expected that tradtional Left-wing poliicies such as the nationalization of banks and some key industries, and increased social welfare, would be given priority by the new Government and this was indeed the case (1). However, the announcement that a "vast" programme of political decentralization would be carried out caused some surprise, especially among foreign observers. The French Left had, however, swung over to some of the theses of regionalism in the 'Sixties despite having been firm Jacobins prior to this (2). Furthermore, decentralization was one of the basic themes of the 110 Propositions of the candidate Mitterrand. There should, therefore, have been less surprise than this announcement provoked. In any case the political decentralization promised by the Socialists was no less significant than their other promised policies since it involved a fundamental change in the relations between the citizens and the state and of the intermediary bodies between them. This proposed change had its foundation in a theory of democracy espoused by the Socialists based on the idea of the "droit à la différence" intended to replace a liberalist notion of

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democracy which they conceived as leading to a levelling down and dehumanizing of the individual. The new government announced its intention of carrying out a radical overhaul of the prefectoral system, which had retained its basic features since it was set up by Napoleon 1 (3). President Mitterrand went so far as to declare that the decentralization reforms would be "la grande affaire du septennat".

The legislative basis of the reform programme may be found in the law of 2 March 1982, modified and completed by the law of the 22 April 1982 (4). The main purpose of these laws was to democratize local government institutions by substituting an elected executive (Conseil général and Conseil régional) for an appointed one (the préfet). This would entail a transfer of powers (compétences) and a corresponding transfer of resources and personnel. Although the reform programme has been only partially completed, some critical commentaries have appeared (5). This paper is concerned with only one aspect of the reforms, albeit an important one: the granting of a Statut Particulier to Corsica. Corsica was perceived by the Socialists as having a peculiar set of problems not to be found even in the other "ethnic" regions of France. This peculiarity derived from the fact of insularity. Nevertheless, the island was also seen as being a particular instance of a wider problem - the plight of regions and linguistic minorities - and it was therefore chosen to be test-case (a banc

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d'essai) for the decentralization reforms as a whole. What was to be tested in particular was the functioning of the new decentralized institutions.

There is obviously a certain amount of ambiguity here. How can Corsica be used as a test-case for a general phenomenon if it is a particular case?(6) The answer to this problem seems to be that while the degree of the island's problems differed from that of the other regions such as Brittany and the French Basque Country (reflected in the higher level of political violence on the island), the nature of the problem is the same: how to transform peripheral societies from backward enclaves of economic decline and political clientelism to modern democratic societies. The attempt to promote this kind of development on Corsica does indeed allow us to make some kind of prediction as to the possible development of the decentralization programme in the rest of France. This paper therefore will first of all examine the background to the reforms - the problème corse. It will then analyse the main legislative texts which form the statut particuler. This is followed by an examination of the functioning of the new institutions to date and an assessment of their possible development. However, it should be stressed that this paper is mainly an empirical analysis and is therefore largely historical and descriptive. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the elements contained in it may serve as the basis for further reflections on

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the problems of regional and institutional reform, fedaralism and unitary states, the problem of ethnic conflict and mobilization, etc.

Le problème corse

The "problème corse" is the result of historical, cultural, social and political factors which combined in the period following the Second World War to produce an explosive situtation (7). Previous French governments, such as those of the Giscardian period, sought to diminish the seriousness of the problem by claiming that there was no problème corse but "des problèmes en Corse". This aproach was based on the Jacobin denial that there existed such a thing as an organic Corsican entity (such as an "ethnie", "nation" or "peuple"), as the regionalists claimed, and the corollary was that there are no Corsicans but "des Français qui habitent en Corse". As we shall see, this question of identity is central to the Corsican problem and each side - the Jacobin and the regionalist - emphasized one aspect of the complex Corsican identity. However, the governmental approach mentioned here was meant principally to obfuscate the problem rather than elucidate it. What it failed to recognize was the existence of one problem made up of several dimensions. A satisfactory solution to the

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problem presupposed a recognition of this global aspect. This section will lay bare the different elements of the problem in order to grasp its totality.

(i) The cultural element: a dual identity

Culture is here used in the sense of a set of practices, from the manner of preparing food to linguistic expressions, that give to any social group a set of characteristics marking it off from other groups. Cultural identity is the self-consciousness of that group with regard to its own culture. The complexity of the Corsican identity derives from the peculiar historical and geographical circumstances of the island. Corsica became French in 1768/9 after an ephemeral period of independence when Pascal Paoli attempted to set up a democratic liberal Republic (8). Since then, most Corsicans have remained loyal to France, principally because of the benefits they derived from belonging to a great power. The island, however, had been a colony of Genoa for several centuries prior to its annexation by France. It was this participation in what may be called "Italianate" civilization over a period of several centuries that gave to Corsica its particular social and linguistic traditions and its ancient culture, which are closer to those of the Italian peninsula than to mainland France.

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The survival of this ancient culture may be explained by geographical factors. Corsica is only 80kms from Italy but 180kms from France. Its inaccessible mountainous interior contained a population which lived clustered in small villages, most of which were isolated from each other by impassable mountain ridges. Because of this external isolation and internal inaccessiblity, communication between France and the island was extremely difficult, with the result that the traditional "Italianate" society and culture survived after the annexation by France much longer than was the case for other French regions which became assimilated by a process of cultural osmosis because of geographical proximity(9). Italian remained the written (if not official) language of the Corsican elites until well into the second half of the nineteenth century. The last Corsican poet to express himself in Italian (as well as Corsican and French) died in Florence in the 1930's (10). The illiterate peasantry, as well as the educated middle classes, continued to speak the Corsican dialect which is, in reality, a dialect of Italian (11).

The French language began to become dominant over Italian only during the Second Empire. Its progress accelerated as the system of universal education instituted by the Third Republic began to have effect and eventually Italian was completely displaced by French. Nevertheless, the Corsican dialect continued to be spoken, even by the educated classes, and today it is probable

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that over 70 per cent of the Corsican population over the age of thirty either understand or speak it (12). The result of this situation has been the creation of a dual identity. Many Corsicans are bilingual and bicultural, possessing an ancient "Italianate" identity upon which has been superimposed a French one. This duality is reinforced by the persistence of social customs which emphasized the "difference" of Corsicans from other French people: the role of the family, kinship relations, marriage ceremonies, etc which have been studied by anthropologists. However, the duality extends to every level of society. French political and administrative institions have been taken over and imbued with a spirit quite different from the political philosophy which underlies the modern state in its democratic form, as we shall see below. This, in turn, feeds the sentiment of "being different" on the part of Corsicans and on the part of their French administrators, with, finally, the former living up to the expectations of the latter. This duality or complexity of the Corsican identity contains within itself the seeds of conflict which, nevertheless, would not sprout until recent years when the submerged (Italianate) dimension resurfaced. This first element of the Corsican problem we propose to call the cultural element.

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(ii) The structural element: economic, societal and political relationships

The survival of an ancient culture on which French traditions were imposed was the result of Corsica's geographical position and topographical structures. The same factors influenced the island's development on the economic, social and political levels. It was only slowly that economic modernization occured, mainly as a result of efforts by the French state. Throughout the 19th century, there took place a modernization and diversification of agriculture and some industrial progress, including the appearance of some heavy industry (13). This, however, was partial and geographically uneven and the island's economic structures were marked by the preponderance of an archaic pastoralism and antiquated agricultural techniques, some of which had not changed since neolithic times. The more progressive sectors never succeeded in becoming dominant over the latter, and finally collapsed at the end of the 19th century under the impact of the ascending monopoly capitalism (14). By the turn of the century, practically no industry remained and the agriculturally progressive regions had reverted to the more archaic traditions.

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The social relationships on the island reflected this type of economy and the state of its development. The basis of social life was the extended family and the village. Village life was based, not on a romantic communistic concept of society, but on the struggle for scarce resources (15). In this struggle, villages were divided among themselves as different "parties" struggled for control of the mechanisms and institutions (mainly the mairies) by which these resources were distributed. Thus Corsican society took the form of villages and regions living in autarchic isolation (16) deeply divided among themselves. The basic unit was the family, but groups of families were "represented" by the heads of more powerful families (the capu di partitu) in an ascending pyramidal structure. This structure is what is known in Corsican/Italian as the partitu and in French as the clan. A Corsican's primary loyalty traditionally was to his family and the wider clan of which it was a part rather than to the state. The latter was seen chiefly as a means of promoting the clan's interests. This loyalty was recompensed by a system of favours and menus services rendus. The consequence of this divided structure of society was the omnipresence of violence and conflict. From the level of the village to Corsican society as a whole, Corsicans were divided into rival groups and this rivalry frequently led to blood feuds and the vendetta. It is clear that far from being the cosy "democratic" paradise which some Corsican nationalists are fond of portraying (17), Corsican society was riven by violence,

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vendetta and banditry. Furthermore, there existed very little freedom, in its modern individualistic sense of freedom from, as the village structure was as much a system of mutual spying as of mutual solidarity (18).

The most striking feature of Corsican political development is the slowness with which the modern state imposed itself on this primitive society. If we accept the Weberian notion of the modern state as that institution which has the monopoly of legitimate violence, then Corsica, under French rule, cannot be described as participating fully in the modern state. Throughout the 19th century, this legitimacy of the state was challenged in a de facto fashion by the fact that almost everyone carried arms and the local magistrates and gendarmerie were powerless to stop them. The institutions of the state, such as the judiciary and local government institutions, were invested by the clans who perverted them into organs of patronage and corruption. As remarked above, they existed, in the eyes of Corsicans, principally to serve the interests of the clan. The contemporary system may be said to have been set up in the early years of the Third Republic when Corsican political life simply became the ancient struggle of clan rivalry fought out in the arena of Republican institutions with an almost complete disregard for Republican legality. "Politics", in the sense of the political activity of the modern state based on the conflict of ideological and class positions barely existed on the

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island. The clan leaders adopted the political etiquettes of the French parties, but in practice ignored their ideological content and continued to behave as Corsican partiti. There was practically no difference in the political and social practices of the rival clans (19).

The economic, social and political backwardness of Corsican society had consequences for the nature of the relationship between the island and the French state. The principal consequence in human terms was the massive emigration from the island to the French mainland and colonies. This had been a trickle throughout the 19th century but became a flood toward its end (20). This was exacerbated by the catastrophe of the First World War, when Corsica, like most of rural France, paid a heavy price - between twenty and thirty thousand able-bodied men killed or wounded (21). This in turn was a mortal blow to the already fragile economy and in this situation the clans strengthened their position as mediators between the local society and the state. This mediation took the form of patronage in procuring positions for their clients in the Civil Service, Police, Army and colonies, and pensions and favours for those who remained on the island. This parasitic clan system was, therefore, both a symptom and a cause of the Corsican problem. It reflected the necessity Corsicans faced of ensuring some kind of economic and social survival - what has been described as a "crise compensée" (22) - while at the same

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time it blocked any hope of development since the power of the clans was based on the dire economic deprivation of the majority of Corsicans.

These, then, are the essential features of Corsican society and its relations with the French state which have survived up to the period following the Second World War and, indeed, until today. What is remarkable about the system is, indeed, its capacity for survival by adapting to any set of circumstances whether a change of regime or an economic or political crisis. The constant is that the clan preserves its power by investing the new institutions or by quickly coming to terms with the new masters in Paris. For most of this period, Corsicans did not react against the French state because of these problems. There were regionalist, autonomist and nationalist movements at the turn of the century and in the interwar period (23). These, however, seem to have been a small minority of Corsican intellectuals. On the contrary most Corsicans seem to have had highly positive feelings in favour of the French state since it was the state, via the intermediation of the clans, that was the source of their material and social security. Indeed, most Corsicans were proud of their Frenchness, particularly when they compared their lot with their neighbours - the despised "Lucchesi" (a general term for all Italians) who came from the peninsula and the islands to perform the manual labour despised by the Corsicans themselves. In other

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words, it was the French dimension of their identity that was heightened by these structural elements. A conflict would occur only with the introduction of a new element and to this we now turn.

(iii) The catalytic element: the rapid "development" of post-war Corsica

Corsica was not only the first, but the only French département to liberate itself from German and Italian occupation. The rejection of Fascist irredentism, strengthened during the Occupation by Italian soldiers and Blackshirts, and the consciousness of being the first Frenchmen to liberate themselves, led Corsicans to think of themselves as "super-Français"(24). While Corsicans retained their ancient culture, as we have seen, it was the French dimension that was emphasized during this period. Even more so than in the past, to be Corsican meant to be French, and the awareness of any Italianate dimension was violently suppressed.

This consciousness of being French, however, had in it the seeds of conflict. By the end of the war, the island seemed to be on the point of collapse. The fighting that had accompanied liberation had severely damaged the already moribund economic

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infrastructure. Furthermore, the basic human fabric of the island community was dangerously threatened by the continuing high rate of emigration. Despite the promises of a golden age that many thought would arrive with freedom from Nazi and Fascist Occupation, the government seemed to drag its heels on the question of providing aid to the island (25). Corsicans began, therefore, to ask the question: if we are French, as we have proved by our actions, why do we not participate in the benefits of belonging to France? This sense of frustration was heightened as reconstruction went ahead on the French mainland. In other words, the strong identification with France led to a sense of relative deprivation.

The seriousness of the situtation alarmed even the traditional local politicians, who realized that decline had gone too far and that this threatened their power base and legitimacy (26). This legitimacy was based on their ability to deliver the goods and, in a sense, to defend the interests of the islanders. If the very island community was endangered to the point of near extinction, they could hardly be said to be doing so. It was at this point, in the early fifties, that the economic regionalization programmes of the Fourth Republic coincided with the "protoregionalism" of the local elites within the regions to produce the Plans d'action régionale (PAR) (27). The PAR for Corsica, which became law in 1957, was the result of cooperation

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between technocrats of the Civil Service, the préfet for Corsica, and some local politicians and businessmen(28). The motor of the island's economic recovery was to be tourism, with agricultural development taking a secondary place as a corollary of tourism. The Balearic Isles were chosen as the model for Corsica. The economic ideology underlying the PAR was a neo-functionalist integrationism prevalent in influential "European" circles at the time. The state would provide the economic infrastructure - roads, electricity and water supplies, buildings, etc. - which would then be exploited by private enterprise. Further development would then occur by an "effet multiplicateur" (the phrase used in the wording of the law). Two semi-state bodies (sociétés d'économie mixte) were set up to implement these policies: SETCO (société d'équipment touristique de la Corse) and SOMIVAC (société de la mise en valeur agricole de la Corse). The local politicians co-operated fully with this programme and the two main clan leaders François Giaccobi and Jean-Paul de Rocca-Serra sat in the conseil d'administration of the two bodies. However, those appointed to run them came from outside Corsica, and were mainly reclassified civil servants from Tunisia and Morocco . Thus, the clan leaders found themselves in an equivocal position. On the one hand, they tried to bolster their legitimacy by claiming credit for the new development programme. On the other hand, they lost real control over the new development bodies. This equivocal situation may have been sought by them since, in the case of failure or problems,

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they could throw responsibility onto the administrators. In fact, they did just this.

The Corsican PAR produced some spectacular results. The number of tourists arriving on the island rocketed. A modern, industrialized type of agriculture was introduced and developed by pieds noirs repatriates from Algeria who were given large amounts of land on Corsica's Oriental Plain at cheap prices. However, this rapid development of some sectors of the Corsican economy threatened to accelerate the break-up of the traditional society and excluded large numbers of Corsicans, such as small hoteliers, peasants over whom the pieds noirs were given priority, shop-keepers and business-men outside of the areas zoned for expansion. This is what we have called the catalytic element since it was directly responsible for sparking off the potential conflict of the cultural element and led to a radical questioning of the traditional structures within Corsican society and between it and the state. It is this combination which produced the last element of the problem and to this we now turn.

(iv) The element of alienation

We have described the relationship between Corsica and France as one in which local elites acted as "mediators" or

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"representatives" between the local society and the state. This system was under the control of the clans but excluded others. In the period following the Second World War, those excluded were principally the Communists, the old-style regionalists mentioned above who were tainted with Vichyism or collaboration with the Fascist Occupation, some Corsicans of the Diaspora (such as the large Corsican population of Marseilles led by Bastien Leccia),and Corsican students in Marseilles, Aix and Paris. The first two groups were excluded by a political decision, the latter two by geographical and cultural distance. It was the Communist party in Corsica which, in 1959, took the initiative to create the Mouvement du 29 Novembre, (Mdu29N) whose leadership was made up principally of these excluded groups of Corsican society (29). The movement put forward a simple set of demands (a reform of the island's fiscal statute, the reduction of freight charges between Corsica and the mainland, a protest against the suppression of the island's railway system), and set out to mobilize the population around them. The strategy of the movement was to put pressure on the local politicians by questioning their legitimacy and in this way to influence the system of mediation. Even though they did ot describe themselves as "regionalist", we wish to call them moderate regionalist. They are regionalist in the sense described above (footnote 27). They are moderate in that they did not question the adherence of Corsica to France.

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The moderate regionalists did have a certain amount of success in mobilizing the local population and influencing their politicians. This they did by creating local committees all over Corsica, organizing mass meetings to voice their grievances, holding demonstrations and marches and calling for general strikes (isula morta) which were well observed. One of their principal arguments was that the local politicians failed to protect the island's interests and in this way they struck at the heart of their legitimacy.

However, the heterogeneous nature of the movement, containing a majority who did not question the traditional institutions of the départements and communes, prevented it from attacking the system as such. Their aim was rather to clean up the system by subsituting a different form of political behaviour for the old type of clientelism. In the end, the clans managed to infiltrate the movement and put their men into the key positions of leadership. This, in turn, led to a dilution of its demands and destroyed its effectiveness as a protest group. This led to a split in 1963 between, on the one hand, the radical regionalists, including the old-style regionalists and the young intelligentsia on the mainland, and, on the other, those parties of the French Left (Communists and Socialists) who at this point came to terms with the local politicians. The Mouvement du 29 Novembre changed

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its name to the CAPCO (Comité d'action et de promotion de la Corse) and then faded from the scene of Corsican politics.

The radical regionalists are so called because it was they who began to promote the non-French (Corsican/Italian) side of their identity, although they were at pains to play down any Italian connection given the unfortunate experience of the Occupation. This ethnic "otherness" became the basis of an ideology (which they called at first "regionalism" and then "autonomism") which put into question the political, administrative and economic relations between the island and France. There were two main tendencies among the radical regionalists. On the one hand, there were the old-style regionalists, whose sympathies lay on the right of the political spectrum (for example, with Maréchal Pétain or with Poujade) some of whom had collaborated with Vichy or the Italians. This tendency was known as the CEDIC (Comité d'études et de développement des intérêts corses), whose chief ideologue was Paul-Marc Seta, assisted by Max Simeoni, then a young medical student. This tendency became known as ARC (Action régionaliste corse) and is represented today, albeit with an apparently more "progressive" political philoshopy, by the UPC (Unione di u Populu Corsu) of Edmond Simeoni, brother of Max. Their demand was based on the federalist idea that there existed a Corsican "ethnie" (or, later, "peuple") which had a legal right of existence and survival. In their analysis, the Jacobin state

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existed to destroy such ethnies and create an agglomeration of atomised individuals. Such protection could be assured only by appropriate administrative structures. The model chosen was the statutes of internal autonomy granted by the Italian state to Sicily and Sardinia. The other tendency was the FRC (Front régionaliste corse), whose principal leaders were Charles Santoni and Dominique Alfonsi. The FRC may be described as an overhauled version of old-style regionalism. The difference lay in the their use of Marxist terminology and concepts. This gave them an apparent progressiveness which their rivals lacked. The FRC thought of Corsica as a "nation" oppressed by an imperialist power, the French state, in the same way that other colonies were oppressed by imperialism. In other words, they began to apply to Corsica the theory of internal colonialism which had been developed by the Occitan militant and intellectual Robert Lafont (30). They too demanded radical changes in the relations between Corsica and France but proposed a process of change in the context of a wider socialist transformation of French society.

There were differences too in political strategy and support base. The right-wing radical regionalists were more populist and wished to continue the tactics of the Mdu29N of mobilization of the population. However, they were more willing to use the electoral process to do so. This they soon abandoned given the corrupt nature of the electoral system in Corsica which they claimed was

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intrinsically biased in favour of the clans. The support base of this tendency was the small farmers around the Oriental Plain, disgruntled by the favour shown to the pieds noirs, small businessmen and shopkeepers, and some intellectuals such as school-teachers. In other words, the support base of Right-wing radical regionalism resembles that of the Poujadiste mouvement. The FRC, on the other hand, tended to be confined to the young intellectuals living on the French mainland, although Dominique Alfonsi did return to Ajaccio in the early sixties to begin a movement of his own. The group did not seek to mobilize the population but provided the growing regionalist movement with the ideology we have outlined above (31). Both groups came together for a few months in the sixties, but the ideological split between Left and Right was too great and they went their separate ways. The UPC still exists under that name, still dominated by Edmond Simeoni (who has nevertheless retired from active leadership because of health problems). The FRC tendency has also survived but under different names. Its present representative is perhaps the PPC (Partitu Populare Corsu) whose leader is Dominique Alfonsi. Charles Santoni and some of his friends joined the Socialist Party in the 1970's but left in 1982 in disagreement over the application of the statut particulier for Corsica by the Socialists (see below).

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We have described the regionalist groups as being excluded to one degree or other from the system of mediation that passed for the island's political life. The logical extreme of exclusion is to "prendre le maquis" as the old bandits and the Resistants against Fascism had done. To take to the maquis means to take up arms against the state and this has occurred in Corsica from the early sixties when the first bombings took place against the installations of the SOMIVAC on the Oriental Plain, mainly in the Fiumorbo region. Several armed groups made their appearance carrying out such attacks. In 1976, several of these groups came together to form the FLNC (Front de Libération nationale de la Corse), whose aim is to set up an independent Corsican Republic. This tendency, dedicated to the violent overthrow of French rule in Corsica, developed out of radical regionalism and may be called separatist nationalism. The relations between it and radical regionalism are equivocal. The latter condemns violence, but many of those who have taken up arms have served their political apprencticeship in the UPC and FRC. Furthermore, the UPC has, on occasion, taken up arms itself, although in a public manner (as opposed to the clandestine manner of the FLNC), as during the events of Aleria in 1976 (32). In any case, the FLNC, while remaining a tiny minority of the island's population, were nevertheless able to generate sufficient violence and counter-violence to create widespread public unease. They also became a symbol of resistance in the eyes of much of the island's young

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population, with the consequent possibility of massive recruitment into their ranks. This tendency has carried to its logical conclusion what was implicit or ambiquous in the ideological position of radical regionalism: the rejection of any French dimension to their identity.

These, then, are the principal features of the Corsican problem. The rapid and unbalanced development programme of the 1960's, delivered a shock to the traditional relationships of a society that had survived, albeit in a moribund form, almost unchanged. This brutal change provoked various political responses in ideology and practice from different sections of Corsican society. The nature of this response, from moderate regionalism to separatist nationalism, may be related to the degree of participation in, or exclusion from, the system of mediation between the local society and the state. As the process of radicalization developed, there was a dislocation of the different elements of the Corsican identity as the radicals exploited its ambiquity and attacked the French dimension. Finally, this led to a widespread critique of the structural relations between Corsica and France. Some radical regionalists wished simply for a statute of autonomy within France by which the Corsican "ethnie" could have control over its own affairs. Others saw the problem as demanding a "national liberation" by which the colony of Corsica would throw off the yoke of French imperialism. All of the radical

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regionalists turned to the past to find the Corsican "nation" and to legitimize their present struggle. Most found it in the Paolian Republic and this became a mobilizing myth to counter the Jacobin myth of the French nation. The net result in political terms was endemic violence, widespread public unease, and the possibility of an even more massive alienation of Corsican youth.

Governmental responses

Governmental policy towards protest movements in France has been carried out by "fits and starts". A situation is allowed to build up in which positions on both sides harden and then, suddenly, the government concedes some demands but not others. This has the effect of further radicalizing the protest movement. This, in effect, is how the governments of the Fifth Republic have responded to the Corsican problem. Most of the demands of the moderate regionalists were eventually met, but too late to prevent the radical regionalists occupying the centre of the stage. Under Giscard d'Estaing, governmental policy toward Corsica, where the radical regionalists were now making the headlines, was a mixture of the carrot and the stick. The carrot was the continued massive subsidization of the island, which only reinforced the structural elements of the problem since the subsidies were distributed in a clientelistic manner. The stick was the equally massive use of police repression and the State Security Court, set up during the

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Algerian crisis to deal with subversives. By the time of the 1981 elections, many Corsicans were extremely demoralized and there was widespread fear that, in the event of a Giscardian victory, repression would be stepped up, followed by a corresponding increase in political violence (33).

The Socialists and Corsica: the Statut Particulier

Fortunately for Corsica, it was not Giscard but Mitterrand who won the Presidential election of May 1981. After the Socialist victory in the June parliamentary elections, the new Left-wing government decided to turn its attention to the problème corse. This was part of a general programme of reforms which included political decentralization as a means of introducing a greater degree of democracy into local government as well as meeting some of the demands of linguistic and cultural minorities for a new deal from the French state, traditionally backward in this area.

Those who had especial responsibility for the island had an intimate knowledge of the situation. Gaston Defferre who, as Minister of the Interior and Decentralization had the task of drawing up and implementating the decentralization laws, was also mayor of Marseilles, a city with the largest Corsican population

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outside of Corsica. His right-hand man in Marseilles was Bastien Leccia, a Socialist deputy of Corsican origin who, as noted above, was one of the leaders of the Mouvement du 29 Novembre. Furthermore, in the 1970's there took place a movement of transfuges from the regionalists to the Socialists, including, as we have seen, Charles Santoni. These Corsican Socialists were responsible, in 1977, for putting together a bill for the National Assembly which would have given to Corsica a Statut Particulier which was very close to the statute of autonomy demanded by the radical regionalists (34).

Not surprisingly, the bill did not get far in an Assembly dominated by the Right. Nevertheless, it provided the inspiration for the Socialist project of 1982. The new government was determined to make a radical break with the policies of the Right-wing governments of the past and decided that, in the case of Corsica, the way to do so was by a statut particulier. In fact, divisions within the PS itself and limitations imposed by the Conseil constitutionnel led to a toning down of the 1982 version compared with that of 1977 (35). The principal difference between the two is that, whereas in the original version, decisions of the Corsican Assembly (elected by direct universal suffrage) would have been binding on the national government, in the updated version, the Assembly would only have a consultative role. In other words, there was a firm rejection of any drift towards a

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federalist system and a reaffirmation that political sovereignty should remain totally with the central government. Nevertheless, the Socialist project does represent a more radical form of political decentralization compared with the regionalization attempts of their predecessors, if only in that the functioning of local administrative institutions, because of election by universal suffrage, is now to be controlled by the local populations. Furthermore, in the Corsican case, an examination of the legislative texts,and the new institutions which they establish, reveals a largely coherent and comprehensive attempt to deal with most of the elements that have been outlined in the first section of this paper.

The Socialists had to strike a balance between two opposed ideologies and political groupings. On the one hand, there were those who had been alienated from the political system - the regionalists of various kinds. On the other, there were those, perhaps the majority of Corsicans, who feared that any move toward political decentralization would lead to the separation of Corsica from France. Many local politicians also feared the consequences of a decentralization which forced political responsibility on them, accustomed as they were to the irresponsibility of patron-client relationships made possible by massive subsidization from the state. The Socialist Party, having adopted regionalist theses in the 1960's and '70's, tended to sympathize with the former

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group. At the same time, they knew they could not afford to alienate the latter.

The statut particulier for Corsica reflects this desire to reconcile these opposing tendencies, but also represents a wish to change the system of irresponsibility of local politicians by introducing a greater measure of local democracy. For the Jacobins, there is the reassurance that the reforms are not intended to encourage any move toward federalism. For the regionalists, there is the setting up of a Regional Assembly, elected by direct universal suffrage, which would allow the local population greater control over their political, social, economic and cultural affairs.

In practice, however, the Statute leans more toward the regionalists than toward the traditional Jacobins (as opposed to the new Jacobins of the PS). First of all, there is the recognition that Corsica is a special entity with characteristics that mark it off from the rest of France:

> L'organisation de la région de Corse tient compte des spécificités de cette région résultant, notamment, de sa géographie et de son histoire.

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An entire section (Titre ler) of the law of July 1982 dealt with the "identité culturelle de la Corse" (36). While the laws did not explicitly recognize the existence of an "ethnie corse" or a "peuple corse", a recognition long demanded by the radical regionalists as the legal basis for policy-making, the emphasis on Corsica's specificity was at least a step in the direction of such a recognition. On a visit to the island in 1983, President Mitterrand himself used the phrase "le peuple corse", which seems to confirm this (37). This point may seem trivial to outsiders, but it was central to the demands of the radical regionalists, who had adopted the federalist idea that the legal basis of centre-periphery relations should be that of a contract between a legal person (the "ethnie" or "peuple") and the state drawn up by the two partners as equals. In fact, the Socialists have not abandoned the Jacobin concept of the state as the primary and final locus of political sovereignty, in opposition to this federalist concept. Nevertheless, with regard to the awareness of the regionalists' position, there has been a notable shift from the period when French governments merely recognized "des Francais qui habitent en Corse" to a recognition that Corsicans might at least have a dual identity and that Corsican society has a specific character.

The institutions created by the statut particulier may also be seen as a concession to the radical regionalists, even if, as we have seen, the powers granted to them are less than the latter

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hoped for. The most important of these institutions is the Corsican Assembly, consisting of sixty-one members elected by direct universal suffrage by proportional representation (38). The executive of the region is no longer the préfet régional, who becomes instead the commissaire de la République, but the President of the Assembly and his bureau of vice-Presidents. This may be seen as a response to the demand by regionalists for greater political control over the regional institutions. At the same time, the specificity of Corsica is recognized by giving it an Assemblée while the other regions will simply have Conseils. The difference lies in more than the name as the Assembly will have greater powers than the Conseils. Its basic function is to administer the economic, cultural and social affairs of the regions (39). It will do this principally by deciding the priorities of that portion of the national budget allotted to Corsica and then entering into a contract with the state on the basis of this decision. While Corsicans have in this way, been given a greater control over how their island is administered (thanks to the system of election by universal suffrage), political sovereignty remains with the government since the latter may veto any proposal that the Assembly puts forward. The only binding power the Assembly has on the government is to stop any proposed legislation of the latter which affects the region in order that the advice of the region may be given. In the end, however, the government is not obliged to accept this advice. This dilution of

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the Assembly's powers may be seen as a result of that continuing Jacobinism of which we have spoken above (40).

Other institutions created by the statut particulier have the function of assisting the Assembly in its task of administering the region. These include two consultative councils: the conseil économique et social and the conseil de la culture, de l'éducation et du cadre de vie, the latter being unique to Corsica. The members of these councils are appointed in a proportion that should reflect the importance of the forces vives of the region (economic, social and cultural interest groups).

This desire to include a wide cross-section of the local population (and not simply local notables) may be seen as following the basic logic of the Socialists' reforms: the attempt to promote greater democracy at the local level. An important aspect of this is the inclusion of those who had been alienated in various ways from the mainstream of Corsican political and social life as outlined above. These include cultural activists who felt the Corsican culture had been degraded by official neglect and even hostility, political actors who felt they could not participate in the existing political system over which they could exercize little control, and economic groups such as trade unions and peasant groups who were excluded by pre-existing regional bodies set up during the period of Right-wing governments.

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According to the regionalist theory developed by the Left, democracy would be promoted only by the inclusion of these forces vives into the political system and the processes of decision-making and implementation. Only in this way could the structural problem be solved (the corrupt system of patron-client relationships and economic dependency). This approach is also evident in the creation of bodies known as the Offices (economic development agencies). Corsicans had long complained that the SOMIVAC and the SETCO were controlled by non-Corsicans in the interests of groups foreign to the island. The establishment of the Offices is meant to rectify this situation by placing the development agencies under the control of the Regional Assembly and therefore of the local population.

These development agencies are the Office d'Equipment hydraulique and the Office du Développment agricole et rural, which replace the SOMIVAC. Both Offices have a single Conseil d'administration and Art. 16 (41) stipulates that professional farmers' organizations should have the majority of seats on it. Art.15 states that the Office du Développement agricole et rural must submit its budget proposals to the Regional Assembly, which may then modify them. In this way, it is hoped to avoid the abuses that had marked the SOMIVAC operations. Greater control over transport is provided by an Office des Transports, by means of which the Region would take over from the state ("l'Office des

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Transports est substitué à l'Etat") the responsibility for negotiating contracts with the maritime companies. These contracts would define "les tarifs, les conditions d'exécution, et la qualité de service ainsi que leurs modalités de contrôle"(42). The Presidents of the three Offices are chosen by a vote of the Regional Assembly.

The Socialists wished in this way to promote a type of development which differs from that of the PAR of 1957. It is now agriculture that occupys the central place instead of tourism. However, the latter is not neglected and an Agence régionale de Tourisme has also been created. In fact, there is a concern to promote a harmonious economic development and the decentralization laws, as well as the Statut Particulier, have created several bodies to bring this about. These include the Comité de Coordination pour le développement de la Corse, presided by the Prime Minister (art. 8); a group composed of mayors to draw up a Schéma d'Aménagement de la Corse (art. 9); a Commission mixte sur l'emploi (art. 21), the presidency of which is "alternativement assurée par un représentant de l'Etat et par un représentant de la Région de Corse"; a Comité régional de Prêts; and a Comité régional de la Communication audiovisuelle (art. 5) (43). Besides these bodies specific to Corsica, the region will receive others under the general programme of decentralization, notably in the

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fields of education, culture and environment, housing and professional training (loi du 7 janvier, 1983).

There is also to be a transfer of resources and personnel, an administrative deconcentration corresponding to this political decnetralization. All field services of the state will be grouped under the direct control of the Regional Prefect, who will then make them available to the executive of the Regional Assembly (44).

In summary, then, it may be argued that the Socialist Statut Particulier is a comprehensive attempt to deal with several elements of the problème corse. By recognizing and promoting the two dimensions of the Corsican identity, an attempt has been made to reconcile and harmonize both of them. The structural element is met by setting up bodies whose function is to promote a more sane and balanced economic and social development. By democratizing the regional bodies, it is hoped to change the traditional political irresponsibility of the local politicians by thrusting responsibility upon them. At the same time, it is hoped that the input of the forces vives of the region will accelerate this process of modernization. Democratization would also have the effect of reducing the degree of exclusion and alienation. Finally, these measures are designed to counteract the catalytic element, as a more harmonious type of development is promoted by the forces

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vives and the reformed local politicians. At least this is the theory? What about the practice? To this we now turn.

The setting up and functioning of the new institutions

The were two main sources from which possible resistance to the reforms would come: from the local politicians and from within the Civil Service (45). To overcome this possible resistance, the government chose the tactic of speed (46). The main legislative texts had become law by mid-1982 and the elections to the Corsican Assembly were to be held in August of the same year. This had the advantage of catching the Opposition (the traditional French Right), still in disarray and demoralized, on the hop, while the government benefitted from the prestige of its recent victory. On the other hand, it entailed the risk of a hasty, ill-prepared implementation of one of the basic planks of the Socialist programme.

In practice, the reforms have been implemented more smoothly than might have been expected . The FLNC had called a cease-fire before the Presidential elections and prolonged it as they waited

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to see the new government's response to the Corsican problem. Although they finally denounced the government's plans as a "new form of colonialism", and their political counterpart the Muvimentu corsu di Autodeterminazione (MCA) boycotted the Assembly elections in August, the cease-fire nevertheless held until then. Furthermore, the type of proportional representation adopted, with only 1.6 per cent of the vote being necessary to obtain at least one seat, enticed the UPC (autonomists) and PPC (nationalists) to present lists. Thus, the strategy of drawing back into the mainstream of political life those excluded or alienated from it, seemed to be working (except on the FLNC and MCA). Since the Regional Assembly is the key institution of the reform, it was necessary that it should be marked from the start as the legitimate expression of the political complexion of the Corsican people. For this reason, a special Commission was set up, to examine and purge the island's electoral registers, notorious for their inflated character (47). This measure was also designed to attract the autonomists and nationalists who had hitherto refused to contest elections on the grounds of their corrupt character(48).

The elections were marked by a high turn-out (68.84 per cent of registered voters cast their votes - 138,412 out of 201,166) (49). Surprisingly for Corsica, there were no claims of electoral irregularities. The government was highly pleased with the success

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of the elections. Gaston Defferre later remarked that "les élections se sont déroulées dans le calme et la dignité. Pour la première fois depuis longtemps, aucune contestation n'a accompagné la proclamation des résultats. L'élection de votre Assemblée n'est entachée d'aucun soupçon ..." (50). This view was later reiterated by President Mitterrand himself during a visit to the island: "Vous avez battu les records de participation, sans aucun contentieux électoral. Voici donc une Assemblée incontestable dans sa realité démocratique" (51).

The actual results of the election, however, brought only mixed comfort to the government. First of all, there was a multiplicity of lists - 17 lists each containing 61 candidates, or 1037 candidates for 61 seats in an electorate of roughly 200,000 registered voters - with each major political formation, including the Communist Party, facing a dissident list. The Socialists themselves were challenged by a list led by Charles Santoni, who had been expelled from the party because of disagreement over the implementation of the Statut Particulier. Such a multiiplicity, reminiscent of the politics of the Fourth Republic, held out the prospect of an unstable Assembly, since the formation of a majority would be more difficult. At first, however, the government were more concerned that their strategy of wooing the autonomists paid off. The UPC had indeed won 7 seats and 10.6 per cent of the votes cast. Since the Left/Right blocs did not each

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have enough seats to form a majority, the UPC found itself in a mediating position. It decided to ally itself with the Left and this enabled a majority to vote for a President, Prosper Alfonsi of the MRG, who then formed the executive (52). The internal Commissions were set up, and so the Assembly got under way (53). The first phase of the reform passed off, therefore, successfully.

At this point, however, the hasty and ill-prepared nature of the reform began to have its effect and threatened to damage the credibility of the new institutions. The building that housed the Assembly was inadequate, there was insuffient funding for the Assemly's administration, complaints were heard that the government did not take its own brainchild sufficiently seriously, etc. Furthermore, the FLNC, unimpressed by the reforms, relaunched its campaign of violence and even stepped it up, causing public unease (54). The diminishing credibility of the Assembly and its inability to deal with the violence, combined with the growing public unease, prompted the government to act. The Prime Minister, Pierre Mauroy, setn a letter reaffirming government support for the reforms (55). In June 1983, President Mitterrand himself paid a solemn visit to the island to bolster the prestige of the Assembly and to reassure all sections of the population. This was followed up by a visit from Gaston Defferre with the same purpose.

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Despite this shaky beginning, the reforms have, nevertheless, been well under way and there are several indications that the new institutions will survive and even have a certain amount of success. First of all, the Assembly has been set up and those initially opposed to the Statut Particulier (the local politicians) have not sabotaged it. On the contrary, realizing that the nature of the "transmission belt" by which resources are channelled from the centre to periphery had irreversibly changed, their aim has been to capture the most important places in the new sytem. With the help of an intermediary group called the "intergroupe de sept" (56), they managed to secure the Presidencies of the important Offices. Furthermore, they voted, almost unanimously with the Left, in favour of the the budget priorities, at 5.30 a.m. on 25th February 1984 (57). These would form the basis of a contract negiotiated between the Assembly and the government. The later reversal of position of the Right helped by the "intergroupe de sept", which blocked the Assembly's functioning and provoked its dissolution by the government, may be interpreted as a tactical move rather than an attack on the institution itself. The Right-wing Opposition hoped in this way to strengthen its position and even to win a majority in a new election (for an analysis of the August 1984 elections see below). But this in itself indicated an awareness that local politics must now be fought out within the new institutions. In other words, the

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Socialists had created an irreversible process to which all Corsican politics had to adapt itself.

Secondly, despite the refusal of the FLNC to accept the new institutions, most of those alienated from the system have been drawn back into it. It is significant that Edmond Simeoni, one of the original founders of the ARC/UPC tendency, and three of the founders of the FRC, Charles Santoni, Dominique Alfonsi and Lucien Felli, all sat as Assembly members in the first Assembly. The withdrawal of the UPC from the Assembly on the 12th January 1984 was explained by the party as a protest against the government's "abandonment" of the Assembly (58). This criticism, however, implies an acceptance of the new institutions. The real motive behind the withdrawal was more probably the fear that the UPC would lose influence among Corsican youth, who suspected them of having gone soft on the government and the "pouvoir"(59). It is more likely that they, too, wished to use the new elections to increase their representation in the Assembly. Furthermore, the FLNC has become increasingly marginal and is now perceived by most Corsicans either as a threat to their fundamental conviction that Corsica should remain French or as being undemocratic. Many Corsicans who had hitherto sympathized with the group became ill at ease with the xenophobic campaign against "continentaux" (Frenchmen from the mainland). This has been aimed mainly at schoolteachers and modest workers such as postmen whose "crime",

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in the eyes of the FLNC, was that they bore French names. The tiny minority support of the FLNC was sarcastically emphasized by Mitterrand when he remarked: "...je ne connais pas de démocratie ou 1,6 per cent, ou plutôt moins, a pu faire la loi à 98,4 per cent" (60).

Thirdly, the transfer of resources and personnel has taken place more or less as planned. There has been practically no resistance from within the Civil Service. The government was astute enough to choose Corsican Civil Servants who desired to reutrn to their home island to take charge of the different field services. Prefects who enthusiastically supported the decentralizion reforms were appointed. Thus an irreversible dynamic has been created which must ensure at least the survival and probably the success of the new institutions.

Finally, the Assembly has begun to act as a forum in which divisions and grievances on the part of the Corsican population may be expressed and fought out (61). If politics is war by another name, then it is possible that the endemic violence which has plagued Corsican society may be acted out in a symbolic manner within the Assembly.

The August 1984 Regional Assembly Elections (62)

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The tendencies outlined so far in this paper have been confirmed by the new elections, held in August 1984, which followed the dissolution of the first Assembly. As has been noted above, this dissolution was provoked by the Right in the hope of strengthening their position in the new Assembly rather than an attack on the institutions as such. On the contrary, it was the confirmation of their acceptance of these institutions. The government wished to prevent a recurrence of the situation in the first Assembly when small groups were able to impose their will and create a situation of instablility. Accordingly, following a recommendation from the Senate, they increased the threshold necessary for a list to obtain a seat from 1.6 per cent to 5 per cent. This higher barrier had the effect of forcing groups to coalesce before the elections and not after them. Whereas in the 1982 elections there were seventeen lists, in these elections this number was reduced to ten.

What is perhaps most significant about these elections from the point of view of our argument that the new institutions are an attempt to draw back into the political process those who had been alienated from it was the fact that the extreme nationalists of the FLNC/MCA tendency presented a list. Now not only the traditional Right-wing Opposition accepted and participated in the new institutions, but the extreme nationalists too. The latter still

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did not accept the institutions as the embodiment of their political aspirations. On the contrary, they wished for a completely independent Corsica. Nevertheless, the institutions had become a central focus of the island's political life and the nationalists were forced to recognize this and try to influence their functioning. In fact, the nationalists' list obtained 3 seats with 5.22 per cent of the votes cast by biting into the support of the UPC who dropped to 5.21 per cent. The latter suffered from the illness of their charismatic leader Edmond Simeoni but the principal reason for their loss of votes was indeed what they had feared: a significant portion of the nationalists voters, especially the young ones, who had given them their support withdrew it because of their alleged compromise with the Socialists. Nevertheless, the nationalists took their seats in the new Assembly and, furthermore, participated in its functioning.

The other notable feature of the 1984 elections was the success of the neo-Fascist Front National of Jean-Marie Le Pen in winning six seats. This frustrated the designs of the traditional Right (RPR and UDF) of winning a clear majority in the new Assembly and they were forced to form a coalition with the extreme Right in order to capture the Presidency and therefore the executive of the Assembly. What is interesting in this situation is that now, for the first time in Corsican history, all the political tendencies on the island from the extreme nationalists to the

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extreme Right were now represented in one Assembly. While the Right have used their position to try to frustrate the nationalists (for example in refusing to vote the credits to the local university accused of being a nationalist hotbed) at least there is now the possiblity that if the Left win power again, perhaps with the help of the autonomists or nationalists these positions can be reversed. In other words, the political conflicts of the island are now being fought out within the new institutions. Only time will tell whether this process will succeed in eradicating the violence.

Conclusion: prospects for the future

So far in this paper we have tended to take the most optimistic view of the Statut Particulier and its potential for resolving the problème corse. This is because there are real grounds for such optimism and the signs so far point to the continuing survival of the institutions and the possibility that in the long term they will contribute to changing and modernizing political behaviour on the island. The Regional Assembly could be seen as having a pedagogic function teaching the local politicians how to

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behave in a more principled manner than has been their custom. This may be achieved by the accountability forced on them by the fact that their performance is now subject to the sanction of the local population because of election by universal suffrage. Furthermore, the old clan system is in the process of breaking down as new political forces (such as the Left, the autonomists and nationalists, and some modernizing sections of the traditional Right) are given the possibility of exercizing power within the Region. At least, these are the possibilities that the new institutions open for the future.

Nevertheless, other commentators, such as Professor Yves Mény, have taken a less optimistic and even a cynical view with regard to the entire decentralization reforms seeing in them another example of plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. While such authors are right to emphasize the continuity with previous decentralization programmes, they seem to underestimate the very real changes that have taken place, in particular the change which allows regional bodies to be elected by universal suffrage. The disappointment of authors such as Michel Crozier (63) may result from too short-sighted a view of the political process and while Crozier is right that "on ne change pas la société par decrét", the "content" (that is local politics) must change as the "context" (the new institutions) changes. This change, however, will take place only in the long term.

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Despite this, the critics are correct to point out certain failings of the reforms. For example, in the case of Corsica there is now an excess of institutions (64). Besides the Regional Assembly and its accompanying institutions, there remain the departmental instutions of the island's two départements. This has led to a certan amount of confusion and overlapping with regard to their functions and powers. In fact, this is an instance of what is perhaps the most serious ambiquity of the entire decentralization reforms: the failure to make a clear choice between a decentralization based on the département or one based on the region, it being generally recognized that the two levels of local government are imcompatible.

This does not detract from the fact that the Statut Particulier does represent a courageous and far-sighted attempt (perhaps the first such attempt in Corsican history) to tackle the "problème corse" in a democratic manner. Paradoxically, the government has had to force the majority of the local population to accept the responsibility of running their own affairs. This is an interesting example of the Rousseauian problem of whether one can force people to be free. The success or failure of the reform depends, then, on two groups of actors: on the islanders themselves and on the government. The former must learn a new set of political habits. The latter have already gone a long way by providing the institutional context within which this take place.

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However, they must continue to provide financial, technical and political support until the island has developed sufficiently to provide largely for itself. This will never be totally possible but at least Corsicans might live in a more dignified manner than has hitherto been possible.

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NOTES

(1) See D.S. Bell and Eric Shaw, The Left in France (Towards the Socialist Republic), Spokesman, Nottingham, 1983, pp 76-90.

(2) See Yves Mény, Centralisation et décentralisation dans le débat politique francais (1945-1969), Paris, 1974; M. Philipponeau, "La gauche et le régionalisme (1945-1974)", in C. Gras et G. Livet (eds), Régions et régionalisme en France, (du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours), PUF, Paris, 1977, pp 529-543.

(3) On previous attempts to reform the French prefectoral system see Howard Machin, The Prefect in French Public Adminstration, London, 1977.

(4) Loi no. 82-213 du 2 mars 1982 and loi no. 82-623 du 22 juillet 1982, see Journal Officiel du 3 mars and 23 juillet 1982.

(5) See Michael Keating, "Decentralization in Mitterrand's France", Public Administration, (Journal of the Royal Institute of Public Administration), Vol 61, no 3, Autumn 1983, pp 237-251.

(6) This question has a political dimension in as far as Corsican regionalists have the emphasized the difference of Corsica whiule French Jacobins (including Corsicans) stress the similarities between the island and the rest of France.

(7) For a fuller treatment of the background see Paul Hainsworth and John Loughlin, "Le problème corse", in Contemporary French Civilization, Vol VIII, no 3, Spring 1984.

(8) In 1768, exhausted by forty years of revolts by Corsicans, Genoa ceded the exercise of sovereignty (but not de jure sovereignty) to France by the Treaty of Versailles. The French gained control of the island only in 1769 when they defeated the forces of the insurgent leader, Pascal Paoli, at the battle of Ponte Novu.

(9) Savoy, for example, was attached to France only in 1860 but is now almost completely assimilated.

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(10) Santu Casanovu (1850-1936). On the question of the Corsican language and its relationship to Italian and French, see F. Ettori, "Langue et littérature", in F. Pomponi et al., CORSE, Edit Bonneton, 1981, pp 169-211.

(11) Corsican regionalists are, in general, reluctant to admit the Italian connection (see below) and claim that Corsican is a language in its own right. However, an Italian speaking Tuscan can easily communicate with a Corsican, whereas this is impossible for a Frenchman. The distinction between dialect and language seems to be valid on political and social grounds (as translating power relationships) rather than on purely linguistic ones.

(12) This is an estimate made by the author.

(13) See E. Perrier, Corse: les raisons de la colère, Paris, 1971, "La Corse connât des années 1815 aux années 1870 un développement économique complexe, contradictoire, mais incontestable", p 16.

(14) See F Pomponi, "Crise de structure économique et crise de conscience en Corse (Fin XIXe siècle - début XXe)" in Typologie des crises dans les pays méditerranéens (XVIe-XXe siècles), Nice 1977, pp 76-113.

(15) See A Casanova, "Evolution historique des sociétés et voies de la Corse. Essai d'approche", Cahiers d'histoire de l'Institut de recherches marxistes, no 12, 1983, pp 36-65.

(16) Complete autarchy was, of course, impossible - there were also interactions of a cultural and economic nature. However, the tendency was to look inward towards one's own clan. The best anthropological work on Corsican village and family life is that of Georges Ravis-Giordani, see for example his "Ethnologie" (avec la collaboration de Rennie Pecqueux-Barboni) in F Pomponi et al., op cit, (1981), pp 61-167.

(17) For example, Charles Santoni, in "La crise de la conscience corse", Les Temps modernes, aôt-sept. 1978, p 226, describes the clan system, in its ancient form, as a "forme de démocratie presque parfaite".

(18) Even the bandits in the maquis, the heroes of romantic writers, were not free - the superstitions which they had internalized in their villages prevented them from

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going around in odd numbers, which was regarded as courting bad luck.

(19) There is a growing literature on the clans in Corsica. See, for example, Antoine Sanguinetti, "Le clan, la violence, et la fraude électorale", Les Temps Modernes, octobre, 1981.

(20) Janine Renucci called it the "virus migrateur", see her Corse traditionnelle et Corse nouvelle, Lyon, 1974.

(21) Estimates vary, see Renucci, op cit.

(22) This is the term used by E Perrier, op cit, p 19.

(23) See Pomponi, op cit, (1977).

(24) This term was actually used, some years after Liberation during the Gaullist period, by a Prefect addressing the Conseil généeral of Corsica.

(25) At this time only the Corsican Federation of the Communist Party had an overall plan for reversing the trend toward the island's economic and social demise, see their weekly newspaper, Terre Corse, 1943-. However, after an upsurge of support after the war, their expulsion from at the national level in 1947 made them less able to put their plan into effect

(26) The position of the clans after World War II differed from their position after World War I since not only was the island's decline at a much more serious point, but they were also strongly challenged by the Communists who had captured about half of the island's votes in elections and had one deputy out the four who represented the island.

(27) Regionalization is used here to denote governmental regional policy. Regionalism is taken to mean the ideology and practice of political and social actors on the periphery who seek greater control over the periphery's resources and over the manner in which national resources are channelled from the centre to the periphery. We have called the early regionalism of the Corsican elites protoregionalism because the term "regionalism" could not be used because of the political "ban" on the idea and on movements associated with it in France in the period following the Second World War.

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(28) On the Corsican PAR, see Anne-Marie Guigue, Le programme d'action régionale et le problème corse, Nancy, 1965.

(29) The name chosen indicates both the ideology and aims of the movement. It was on the 30th November, 1789 that the French National Assembly voted that Corsican should be fully integrated into the "French Empire". The name suggested that Corsican was still only on the eve of integration and demanded that it become a reality.

(30) See his La révolution régionaliste, Paris, 1967, and Décoloniser en France, Paris, 1971.

(31) Especially in their collective publication Main basse sur ûne île, Martineau, 1971, whose principal authors, it seems, were Charles Santoni and Pascal Marchetti.

(32) In August 1976, Edmond Simeoni and an armed group of ARC (Action régionaliste corse) militants occupied the vineyard of a pied noir to protest against a scandal that, in their eyes, epitomized the "problème corse". A gun battle with police ensued and a policeman was killed. Another died later during gun battles in Bastia. ARC was banned and changed its name to the UPC (Unione di u Populu Corsu).

(33) The author was on the island at the time of the 1981 elections.

(34) Proposition de loi, no. 1991, portant statut particulier pour la Corse, seconde session ordinaire de 1976-1977.

(35) Loi no. 82-214 du 2 mars 1982 prtant statut particulier de la région de Corse (organisation administrative), JO du 3 mars 1982, pp 1-16. Louis Le Pensec, one of the sponsors of the 1977 bill, declared that "on ne peut pas faire le ﬃme texte de loi quand on est dans l'opposition et quand on est au gouvernement". Besides this, the jurists of the Conseil constitutionnel pointed out that the "pouvoir réglementaire régional" which the 1977 bill would have given to the Regional Assembly belonged only to the government and was unconstitutional.

(36) Loi no. 82-659 du 30 juillet 1982 portant statut particulier de Corse (compéetences), JO du 31 juillet 1982, pp 2459-2463.

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(37) "...la meilleure facon de représenter ce peuple corse ..." (italics added), address to the Corsican Assembly, Ajaccio, 13th June 1983.

(38) "L'élection a lieu à la représentation proportionnelle, suivant le règle de la plus forte moyenne, sans adjonction ni suppression de nom et sans modification de l'ordre de présentation", art 5 of loi du 2 mars 1982. At first, it was decided that only 1.6 per cent of the votes cast was necessary for a list to obtain a seat.

(39) Art. 2 of loi du 2 mars 1982.

(40) Gaston Defferre, in an address to the Corsican Assembly on the 1st Decembre 1983, forcefully stressed the limitations of the Assembly's powers": "...ni la loi, ni son esprit, ne conduisent à faire que toutes les propositions de l'Assemblée de Corse soient obligatoirement réalisées par le Gouvernement... Le statut particulier, conformément à la constitution, ne donne pas le pouvoir à l'Assemblée de Corse d'édicter, directement ou indirectement, ses propres lois".

(41) Loi du 30 juillet 1982.

(42) Art. 20 of the loi du 30 juillet 1982.

(43) All from ibid.

(44) Ibid, arts. 23-27.

(45) See Machin op cit, for the importance of the resistance to reform by these two groups.

(46) See Mark Kesselman, "The end of Jacobinism?", Contemporary French Civilization, Vol VIII, no 2, 1983.

(47) "une commission de contrôle des opérations de vote de recensement", art. 23 du loi du 2 mars 1982. It was the practice of Corsican mayors, including those of the two big towns (50,000 inhabitants) Bastia and Ajaccio, to "negotiate" with the INSEE, the numbers of inhabitants in their communes!

(48) For a fuller account of the 1982 elections see Hainsworth and Loughlin, op cit.

(49) Le Monde, 10th August 1982.

(50) Address to Assembly, 1st December 1983.

(51) Address to Assembly, 13th June 1983.

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(52) This consists of the President and a number of vice-Presidents whose number may range from four to ten (art. 32 of loi du 2 mars 1982), the number to be decided by the Assembly. It opted for the maximum number, ten.

(53) There are five Commissions: (1) Finances, budget et fiscalité; (2) Plan et interventions économiques, chargée du bilan et de la prospective; (3) Environnement, urbanisme, logement et affaires sociales; (4) Culture, education et formation; (5) Contrôle des agences et offices régionaux. The function of the Commissions is prepare the "décisions qui incombent (à l'Assemblée) et des affaires qui liu sont soumises", art. 12 of the Réglement intérieur of the Assemblée de Corse.

(54) 806 bombs exploded in 1982 and 591 in 1983. Furthermore, there was an increase in criminal activities such as armed robberies, protection rackets, etc., with the distinction between the FLNC and the Corsican underworld being, at times, blurred.

(55) 6th June 1983.

(56) This was formed by two Assembly members who left the UPC, Felli and Ferrandi, the two radical regionalist independents, Santoni and Dominique Alfonsi, and three whose political orientation was towards the traditional Right.

(57) Provoking the cry from Charles Santoni: "E la nave va", La Corse-Le Provençal, 25th February 1984.

(58) La Corse-Le Provençal,13th February 1984.

(59) Interview with ex-UPC Assembly member.

(60) Address to Corsican Assembly, 13th June 1983.

(61) Inhabitants of the mountain village of Bastelica decsended to the Assembly at Ajaccio to discuss a conflict about funding for a cross-country ski station, La Corse-Le Provençal, 22nd October 1983; the question of the financial collapse of the Maison de la Culture de la Corse was taken up by the Assembly; violent incidents during which CRS police attacked striking workers in Bastia were raised by the Communist Assembly members.

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(62) For a fuller analysis, see John Loughlin, "The Elections to the Corsican Regional Assembly, August 1984", Government and Opposition, vol 20, no. 2, Spring 1985, pp 240-250.

(63) For example, Crozier's comment in the preface to the 1984 edition of La société bloquée, that nothing had changed since the arrival of the Socialists to power.

(64) See Yves Mény and John Loughlin, "La Corsica tra rivolta e riforma: il problema corso e la politica del governo di F Mitterrand", in Le regioni, a. XII, no 3, maggio-giugno 1984, pp 483-504.

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